

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 13 and 14 are amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

I. Interviews with Examiner

Applicant appreciates the courtesies shown to Applicant's representatives by Examiner Zimmerman and Examiner Rohwer in the May 2 and May 9 telephone interviews. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interviews is incorporated into the following remarks.

During the May 9 telephone interview, the Applicant's representatives asserted and the Examiners agreed that claims, as amended above, would overcome the currently cited prior art.

II. Rejections

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 6, 8-11, 13-15 and 18-19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0074312 to White ("White"). Further the Office Action rejects claims 5 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0069168 to Lee et al. ("Lee"); rejects claims 7 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White in view of White; and rejects claims 12 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0149661 to Mitchell et al.

Independent claim 1 recites a method of performing a billing process for the copies or prints produced by a customer of a printing system. The method includes, *inter alia*, "a) in the printing system, accessing the memory to retrieve said product usage data without

communicating over a network; b) in the printing system, calculating billing data using the retrieved product usage data without communicating over a network; . . . [and] e) if said authorization information indicates that the customer has authorized the billing data, sending a message from the printing system to a billing service over a network, the message including information indicating the authorized billing data" (emphasis added).

As agreed during the May 9 telephone conference with the Examiners, none of the cited references teach or suggest such a feature. For example, as described in White at paragraph [0004], [0005] and [0014]-[0017], White is directed to "an electronic transaction recording system [that] accumulat[es] data **from** printer devices" and that "manages billing policies attributed to each printer device." Features and operation of such a transaction recording system are described in White at least at paragraphs [0021]-[0025] and Fig. 2. The described processes clearly demonstrate that White relies upon network connections between the printer device 12 and the described billing manager 4. Nowhere does White disclose or suggest that the billing manager is integrated within a printer device 12 to, for example, "retrieve said product usage data without communicating over a network" or "calculate[e] billing data using the retrieved product usage data without communicating over a network," as recited in the claims.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the applied art. Claim 13 includes a feature similar to the feature addressed above with respect to claim 1 and, therefore, is patentably distinguishable over the applied art for at least the same reason. Claims 2-12 and 14-20 depend collectively from one of claims 1 and 13 and are likewise patentably distinguishable over the applied art for at least their dependence on allowable base claims, as well as for additional features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Request for Continued Examination

Date: May 24, 2006

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